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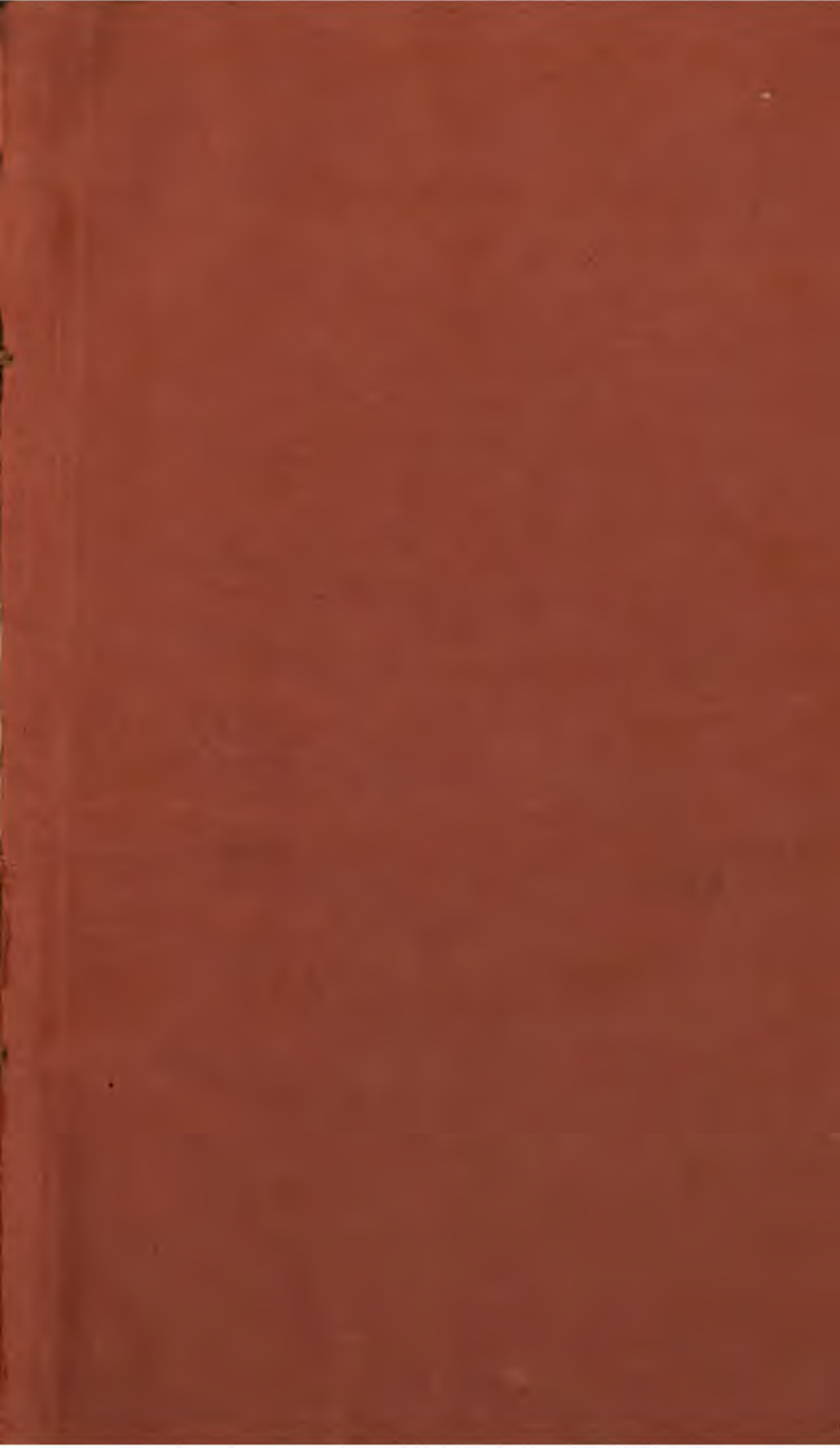
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Bd. Jan. 1873.







ORATION

ON

AMERICAN EDUCATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE WESTERN LITERARY INSTITUTE

AND

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS,

AT THEIR FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER, 1834.

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ,

OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

CINCINNATI:

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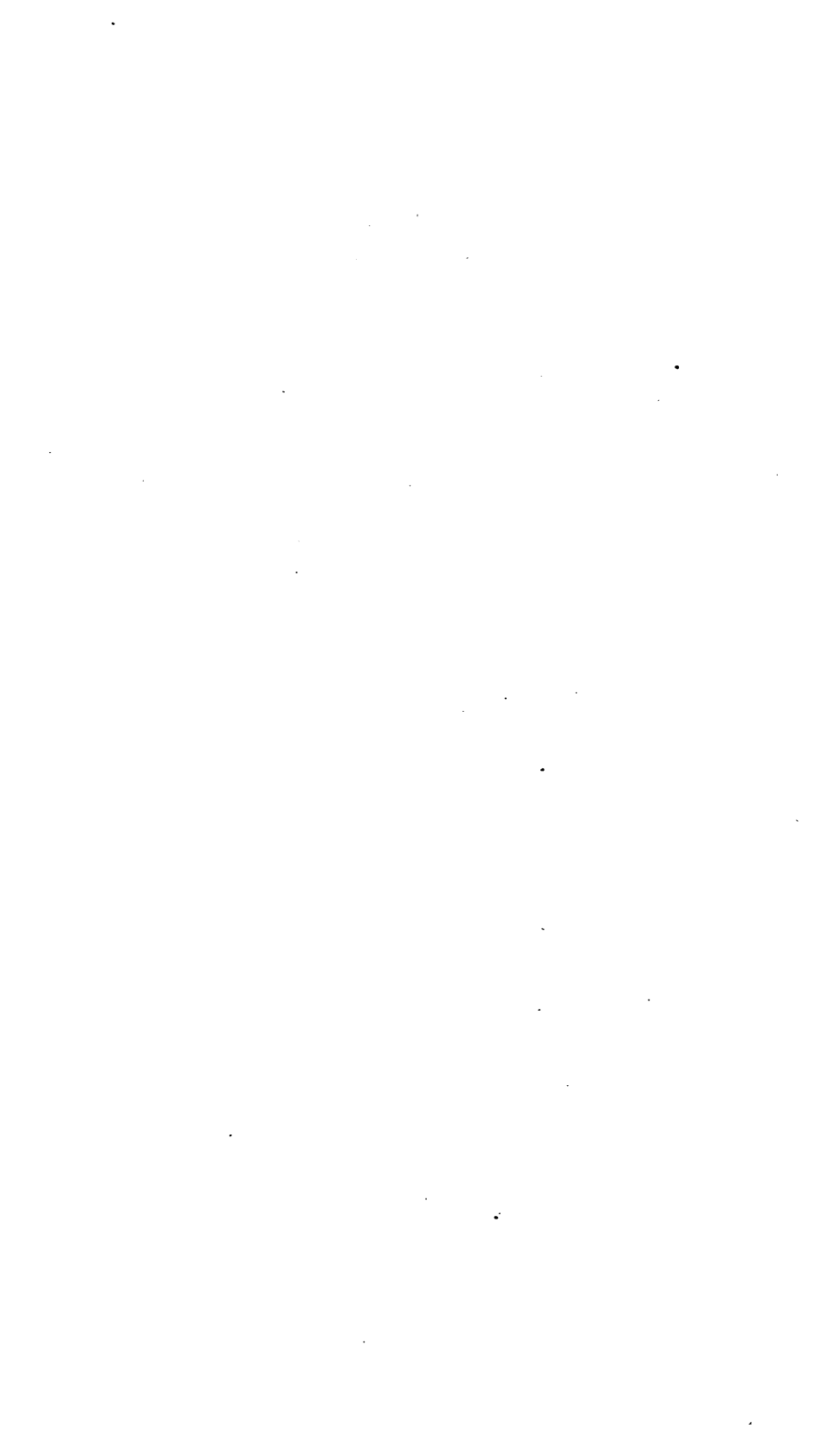
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MEMORANDUM.

Having been long satisfy'd, that the orthography of the English language not only admitted but requir'd a reform; and believing it my *duty* to act on this conviction, I hav publishd sevrал pamphlets accordingly. I felt that *speculation* on the propriety of the change was of little avail, without *practice*. I therefore resolved to set the example, at the hazard of ridicule and censure: and the charge of caprice or singularity. The changes in this piece consist chiefly, if not wholly of the following. (1) The silent *e* is omitted in such classes of words as *disciplin*, *respit*, *believ*, *creativ*, *publishd*, *remaind*, *evry*, *sevrал*, *volly*. (2) The *e* is suppressd and an apostrophe substituted, after the manner of the poets, where the simple omission of the *e* might change the sound of the preceding vowel from long to short, as in *requir'd*, *refin'd*, *deriv'd*. (3) In nouns ending in *y*, I hav simply added an *s* to make the plural, instead of changing *y* into *ie* and then adding an *s*, as in *pluralitys*, *emitys*, *harmonys*, *aristocracys*. (4) In verbs ending in the letter *y*, instead of changing it into *ie*, and then adding an *s*, or *d*, I retain the *y*, and add *s*, or *d*: as in *burys*, *buryd*, *varys*, *varyd*, *hurrys*, *hurryd*. (5.) In similar verbs, where the *y* is long, I retain the *y*, omit the *e*, and substitute an apostrophe, as in *multiply's*, *multiply'd*, *satisfy's*, *satisfy'd*. (6) In such words as *sceptre*, *battle*, *centre*, I transpose the *e*, and write *scepter*, *battel*, *center*. (7) I suppress one of two and the same consonants, where the accent is *not* on *them*: as in *necessary*, *excelent*, *ilustrious*, *recomend*, *efectual*, *iresistible*, *worshipers*. (8) In such words as *honor*, *favor*, *savior*, *neighbor*, *savor*, the *u* is omitted. (9) In adjectivs ending in *y*, instead of forming the comparativ and superlativ by changing *y* into *ie* and adding *er*, and *est*, I hav retaind the *y*, and simply added the *er* and *est*, as in *easier*, *easiest*, *holyer*, *holiest*, *prettier*, *prettiest*.

In quotations and proper names, I hav not felt call'd upon to change the orthography.

IV.—AMERICAN EDUCATION.

ORATION, ON THE SUBJECT "THAT NEITHER THE CLASSICS NOR
THE MATHEMATICS SHOULD FORM A PART OF A SCHEME
OF GENERAL EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY,"

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ.

"The schoolmaster is abroad." This was the language of Mr. Brougham, in reference to the progress of popular improvement in England. If the schoolmaster be abroad there, as he certainly is, it would be strange indeed, if he were not also abroad in our land of popular institutions. Here, the people are all, and every thing is the people's. All exists thro' them and for them. Government, the various institutions of society, religious, literary, and benevolent; all that belongs to arts and arms; whatever blesses our country at home, and sustains her reputation abroad; all proceeds from, and is administered for the people.

The schoolmaster, then, is abroad in our land. We rejoice at it, as one of the signs of the times. It is, as it were, the lifting up of one corner of the curtain of futurity, that a glimpse may be caught, of the glorious prospect which I believe to be now concealed from our view. The schoolmaster is one of the chief workmen, I may almost say the principal, in preparing for the genius of America, in the bright years of that futurity, the most magnificent edifice, that the mind of a nation ever inhabited. We pause not to make good by arguments or proofs, an assertion so grateful to our national pride. It would not be difficult to establish it on the foundation of facts, and by the most convincing moral reasonings, drawn from the experience of the past in all ages and countries, and from the actual development of society thus far, in the United States. But we have other objects now in view; and we therefore trust, for the present, at least, to the national feelings of the audience, and to their aspiration for such a glorious destination hereafter, to bear me out in the sentiment I have advanced.

The schoolmaster is abroad in our land; but whose schoolmaster? He professes to teach the people, and he does give instruction to a great many. Still the question recurs, whose schoolmaster is he? In other words, is he the people's schoolmaster? The answer to this most important, and interesting question, does not depend upon the enquiry; "whom does he instruct?" but upon this, "*what* does he teach?" The character of the people of each successive generation is staked to an incalculable extent, on the capacity and faithfulness of those instructors. Grant them to be under the influence of the most just pride, of a high sense of duty, and of anxiety to be useful. Still we ask the question, "Are they what they should be?" "Do they teach what they ought?" We fear that both enquiries must receive a negative reply.

The schoolmaster, who is abroad in our land, is not the people's schoolmaster, in spirit and in truth, unless he teach them, what is indispensable to their prosperity, happiness and true glory. **HE MUST BE THE CHRISTIAN, THE AMERICAN SCHOOLMASTER:** *he must give them a truly christian and American education, to make them what they should be, peculiarly a christian and American people.* Are these the great end, and practical operation of the scheme of education, now established in our country? We know that they profess to have these in view. But while such are the ostensible objects, (I speak thus without reproach to the purity and sincerity of their founders' motives,) are these ends attained in any degree, proportioned to the wants of the community, and the demand of the spirit of the age in which we live? I speak boldly, but frankly, when I say, that in my opinion the harvest is lamentably deficient, both in the quantity and the quality. The soil is capable of as strong, and luxuriant a growth, as in any other country, ancient or modern; for who, at least on this side the Atlantic, is a believer in the fabulous philosophy of Buffon, that man is degenerate in America. The rain and the dew, darkness and sunshine, clouds and refreshing gales, are bestowed as bountifully here, as elsewhere. But neither the seed that is sown, nor the mode of tillage that is employed, is fitted to accomplish the great objects of a prudent farmer, as rich and abundant harvest, the ornament of his fields whilst in

progress, and the source of comfort, happiness, and ever increasing prosperity, when gathered. I have spoken metaphorically: but I am sure you all comprehend, that I mean to express the distinct opinion, and I may add the settled conviction, that the great body of the materials employed in education in our country, are altogether unsuited to furnish, *what I regard as the only legitimate object of a system of instruction with us, A CHRISTIAN AND AMERICAN EDUCATION.* Is this important end attained? I shall endeavor to show that it is not, and why it is not: and likewise in what manner only, in my judgment at least, it can be attained.

May I be pardoned, if I turn aside for a few moments, to disburthen myself of a thought, which finds here its appropriate place. I condemn to a vast extent, all our existing schemes. I think them radically defective in elements and modes. In one, who has spent the last twenty-five years at the bar, and has never had any practical knowledge as a teacher, except in the instruction of his children, it may be deemed presumptuous to set up his speculations, against the experience which founded and administers a practical system. I am willing to bear the reproach of presumption, if it be only admitted, that I have no selfish purpose to answer, no false pride to gratify; that I honestly believe I am engaged in the discharge of an unwelcome but important duty, and that the progress and honor of religion, the happiness and improvement of our country are my objects. May I also hope that I shall not be rebuked by the sentiment, that the course which I pursue, calls in question the wisdom, virtue and patriotism of the builders and supporters of existing schemes. In a country and an age like ours, freedom of thought and the frank declaration of our thoughts on subjects of vital interest to the people, are at once the duty and privilege of christians and Americans. He who believes that he possesses knowledge or opinions, which are fitted to save the people, is not a good man, or a good citizen, if he withholds them. In such case, he must not wait to be called on; for the chances are, that he never will be. He must volunteer his services. If they are accepted and acted upon, he has his reward. If they are rejected, still he has his reward; the reward of Burke

and Chatham, when they pleaded in vain for conciliation with America. Addison has distinguishd between animadversions on traits of character, and on the individuals who possess them. The former are lawful and proper, the latter to be censured. May I not equally distinguish between the qualitys which mark systems of education, and those who constructed and administer them? May I not condemn the system? whilst I admit their talents, and virtue, their wisdom, learning and experience. This shall be my object, and I trust I shall not fail.

The present system of education is in literature, precisely what the old confederation was in politics, the creature of necessity, a temporary expedient fitted to answer the exigencys of the times, which gave it birth, but totally unfitted to meet the demands of the very next generation. The spirit of the revolution gave to the government of the old confederacy, a life and spirit, which were not its own: and the immediate influence of English institutions, habits, sentiments, and instructors, gave to our system of education, an efficacy, which did not belong to it. The country needed a political reformation: and the people demanded a new constitution. It is just the same now; I believ the country requires a reform in the scheme of instruction; and if the people have not yet demanded *a new constitution in education*, it is because they are not yet aware of the deficiencies *in their old articles of confederacy, in the educational department.*

This is an age, and ours is a country in which educated men are not at liberty to *sit down contented with things as they are.* Their plain duty is, to enquire and examin constantly, *are things as they should be?* Their dutys are activ not passiv. They are responsible for the progress of society in their time: just as the mail-carrier of to-day, is responsible for the custody and condition of the letters, for which another was responsible yesterday, and another is to be responsible to-morrow. Of all men, parents are the most deeply interested in the question, "Are things as they should be in education?" But of all men, teachers are under the strongest obligation, by reason of their opportunitys, station and influence, to examin the question, "Are things as they should be in education?" They hav becom the

voluntary substitutes for parents: theirs are the duties of parents enhanced by their superior means of observation and judgment. My object is first to show that we have great reason to be dissatisfied with things as they are; and second to point out what they should be in our systems of education.

First.—Of things as they are. I proceed to designate what I regard as the prominent objectionable features of our existing systems of instruction.

1. They are not as they should be, *decidedly religious*. It will be granted, for no one can doubt, much less deny, that religion is no part of our plans of daily education. The scriptures, as a branch of education, are nowhere uniformly and steadily taught, as languages and mathematics are. If the Bible be used as a school-reading book, or a few verses be committed to memory, still it is not made the *subject* of daily instruction. I speak of the fact, that the religion of the Bible is not a permanent, substantial part of education among us. I am aware that the Bible has in some few instances forced its way into a school or college; but to *so limited an extent*, as to make *no change* in the *general* character of the system. That system is then undoubtedly an *un-christian*, even if it be not an *anti-christian* scheme.

2. The second objectionable feature is, that the existing plan is, in no proper sense of the word, *American*. It is not even English, considering England and America, as one, in relation to the rest of the world, as having the same language and religion, and to a great extent, the same civil, political, and social institutions. It is true, you will find Morse's or Worcester's or some other American Geography; also some 12 mo. History of the United States, and some such work as Pitkin's civil and political History of the Union, Rawle on the Constitution, the Federalist, or Story on the Constitution, studied in our schools or colleges; but this is actually the whole amount of attention paid to subjects *purely* American. Our own history, biography, eloquence, political philosophy, and constitutional law, are with the trifling exceptions just mentioned, as little known in our systems of education, as in these pursued at Bologna, Coimbra, or Salamanca. The question is not now,

whether it ought to be so; for I am speaking, under this subdivision of my subject, of things as they are. It is sufficient then for my immediate purpos, that in point of *fact*, our system of education taken as a whole, has very little in it purely American. I do not scruple therefore to pronounce it decidedly *un-American*, even if it be not *anti-American*.

3. The third objectionable feature is, that the great mass of the system, is not only un-christian and un-American; but it actually has so little either of christian or American qualits in it, that it would suit equally well any other form of government, any other state of society, any other religion, and any other national literature, regarding English and American as one. This position is undeniable; becaus it cannot be doubted, that the *greater* portion of time, dedicated to a liberal education in this country, is devoted to *classics and mathematics*. If any one doubt, let him only examin the course of study in our colleges, academys, and principal schools. If the quantity by pages merely be considerd, if it do not exceed all the other studys, at least it equals them. But when it is rememberd that the classics and mathematics require *ten times* as much time, as the same quantity of any other text book, whether in mental or moral philosophy, in logic or rhetoric, it is plain that I am right in my position, that the *greater part of our time* is spent on these studys. What now is the fact as to them? what is their true character? As to the mathematics, can it be denyd that they are just as fit a part of education in a despotism, or an aristocracy, as in a republic? Are they not equally applicable to the state of society which prevails in Prussia, Switzerland, Spain, or Holland, as to that of Great Britain or the United States? Who can doubt that they suit as well those countrys, where the religion of Fohi, of Brama, or of Mahomet exists, as those in which christianity is the general creed. And as to national literature, hav they any more connection with that of England and America, than they hav with that of Germany, Portugal or Italy? Let us apply the same test to the classics. That they hav nothing to do with forms of government is manifest. From the classics studyd in schools, and colleges, if we rely'd on them, we should know nothing to any material extent, even

of the political institutions of Greece and Rome; much less of those of any modern European country; and still less of our own. Now as to state of society. So far as the classics hav any relation to them, it is plain, that they can only enlighten us as to those wild and fickle which existed two thousand years ago, under the licentious democracy of Greece, and the compound of proud and turbulent aristocracy and democracy at Rome. With regard to religion, that they hav nothing to do with the Christian, is obvious to evry one, for they hav just as little connection with our faith, as with that of Burmah, Persia or Thibet. Lastly, altho' it cannot be said, that they hav as much to do with Arabic literature, (which studiously rejected the classic orators and poets;) as with ours, yet they certainly hav as intimate a fellowship with the literature of Spain and Italy, France and Germany, as with that of England and America. Confining myself therefore to *facts*, my position appears to me amply sustaind. It is then manifest, that mathematical and classical studys suit nearly as well all forms of government, states of society, religions, and literatures. The little connection, indeed, which they hav with religion is apparent from the remark made by Villers, in his work on the reformation of Luther, that the catholics, and especialy the jesuits, were so sensible of the absolute necessity of excluding the moral and political branches of knowledge, which the reformers were reviving, that they bestowd the greatest pains on the cultivation and introduction of classical and mathematical studys as the great business of education. How little these departments of education hav to do with forms of government and their administration, is apparent from the fact, that the principal Greek and Latin classics were studyd at Rome in the time of Juvenal, and in France under Lewis 14th, and Napoleon, with as little concern on the part of rulers, as at Geneva, Leyden or Oxford. Chateaubriand says in the Preface to his "Genius of Christianity," Bonaparte acknowledged that his work had contributed more to his fall, than any other cause. I am strangely mistaken, if he would not hav said, had his opinion been askd, that he regarded the classics and mathematics, as two of the high priests in that temple of French glory, of which he was the giant idol. Let me add

that the Delphin editions of the classics were prepared by catholic scholars in the age of Lewis 14th, for the education of the heir apparent to the French throne.

4. The fourth objectionable feature in our existing scheme of education is, that *it does not fill the mind with useful and entertaining knowlege*. You will observ, I do not speak here of *disciplin* of mind. That is a different question. As to the mathematics. What knowlege does a man deriv from them, which he can make use of, or to which he refers as valuable and entertaining information, in after life? As to valuable knowlege, except the first and most simple parts of arithmetic, I feel little hesitation in saying, as the result of my experience and observation, *that the whole body of the pure mathematics is ABSOLUTELY USELESS to ninety-nine out of evry hundred, who study them*. Now, as to entertainment. Does more than one out of evry hundred preserv his mathematical knowlege? Chancelor D'Aguesseau, it is said, kept up his acquaintance with them, as a recreation from professional pursuits. But where you find one such instance, you will meet with hundreds, who never found any entertainment in them: and who would think you were bantering, if you recommended geometry, and algebra and conic sections, by way of relaxation and entertainment, in the intervals of professional pursuits. I must say then, I take the fact to be undeniable, that the pure mathematics leav neither valuable nor entertaining knowlege in the memory. I do not of course include natural philosophy; because I admit that it does furnish both useful and entertaining information. Indeed if I could execute my scheme, I would banish to-morrow, with the single exception of common arithmetic, the whole body of pure mathematics out of our system. There could be no difficulty in filling the vacuum. Let it not be said that a knowlege of the pure mathematics is necessary to a right understanding of the mixd. This is true with regard to professors, and to those who desire to comprehend and preserv the profound science of the subject. To *them* it is indispensable; but it is *not indispensable* to those, who merely desire a knowledge of the facts, and an understanding of the principles, without being able to demonstrate a single one. Thus, for example, all can

understand perfectly the law of gravitation, the centripetal and centrifugal force, the Newtonian theory of the tides, &c. &c., without any acquaintance with the reasonings on the subject, drawn from the exact sciences. These reasonings are indispensable to one out of every hundred: They are useless to the ninety-nine.

Let us now apply the same test of useful and entertaining knowledge to the classics. I begin by the remark, that they have certainly the advantage of the mathematics: but if not more than one out of every hundred of those who study the latter, preserves them, certainly not more than one out of every fifty of those who study the *former*, keeps up his acquaintance with them. How seldom are either the classics or mathematics the subject of conversation! Who carries a classic as a travelling companion, by land or by sea? Ten thousand pockets might be picked without finding a dozen classics. As many mantel-pieces and study-tables might be searched, and the result would be much the same. The generality of those, who devoted ten and twelve years, to their study, have abandoned them for life, the instant they became their own masters: and they have never resumed them since. The banishment from the conversation and study of educated men, in their maturer years, to so great an extent, is, in my opinion, one of the strongest proofs which can be given, that all these men have decided *practically*, the question, "Do the classics really contain any considerable amount of valuable and interesting knowledge?"

But we must not stop here. I ask boldly the question, "what is there in the classics, that is really instructive and interesting?" I know it is a literary heresy to doubt, and still more, to deny this. But I regard not such impediments, when truth is my object, and duty my standard of the good and useful. What then do the classics contain to recommend them in these particulars? Shut all your English books, and what would the student in your schools and colleges learn of Ancient History? The only answer is, he would know little or nothing. For example, what would he know of Egyptian, Assyrian, Median, Persian and Syrian history? A few scraps from Herodotus,

Diodorus and Xenophon, are the answer. Ask the same question as to Greek history, and if you treble the number of extracts, and add Thucydides, Plutarch and Polybius, you have the reply. Now, as to Roman history:—A few books of Livy, Cæsar and Tacitus, with Sallust, are the amount of Roman history, studied by our youth, in Latin. Who will venture the opinion, that any, but a most imperfect knowledge, of Roman history can be obtained, from school and college classics? It is then manifest, that the founders and promoters of our scheme of education, never could have intended them to teach Ancient History. But apart from this class of facts, there is nothing in the Greek and Roman historians that is valuable. The truth is, we derive our acquaintance with Ancient History, from Rollin, Mitford and Gillies, from Hooke, Ferguson and Gibbon. And who will not coincide, that the great majority of classical students acquire a more comprehensive and accurate knowledge from those authors: that they understand, and remember it better; and that it is a source of greater pleasure to them, than if they had spent five years more in studying Greek and Latin historians? The same remarks apply, of course, to ancient biography.

With regard to the Ancient orators: they certainly are not intended to teach Ancient History; for the plainest of all reasons; because they presuppose a knowledge of that very history. What other value is there in them? It can only be found in two things: in their views, political and moral, and in their reasoning. But of what real value to us, are their views of their own political history and institutions? who does not know that the civil and political liberty, and institutions of England and America, are, in no respect, whatever, indebted to the political philosophy of Greece and Rome, whether practical or theoretical. Our principles are derived, not from the study of classic models of government, but from the Christian development of feudal institutions. You may strike out of the history of man, all the political institutions of Greece and Rome, and England and America would still be what they are: and ours, the only model government for the world, that the world has ever seen. Did the founders of English freedom

acquire their spirit, or imbibe their lessons from classic lore? Did the English revolutionists of 1640, or of 1688, or our own, of 1776, build on the politics of Aristotle, or the republic of Plato, for political truths; or rely on Athenian and Roman precedents? Not so. They appealed to the peculiar principles of British freedom; to the character of the British constitution, and to British writers, as authorities, on a question of English freedom. And of what value are ancient morals to us, with the New Testament in our hands?—Then, as to their reasonings. Of what substantial worth can their reasonings be, founded on facts and relations, on laws, habits and manners, which are all foreign to us; in which we are not interested; and which are only matters of curiosity? Of what value are they? I ask, in comparison of the reasonings of British and American jurists and statesmen; of Erskine and Burke, of Marshall and Webster, on matters which deeply concern our past and present history and condition, and the prospect before us. This, little less than absurdity, of rejecting the study of our own, and of British institutions, for those, not only of a foreign, but of an ancient people, is one of the most extraordinary features of *things as they are*.

Now, as to the entertainment, deriv'd from studying the Greek and Roman orators. Will you find one, out of one hundred, who studys them with any pleasure, while in schools or colleges; or who ever takes the trouble to review them in after life? What orator ever prepar'd himself for parliamentary combat, over the pages of Cicero or Demosthenes? Chatham devour'd the Bible, Milton, or Burrow's sermons. Fox, it has been suppos'd, had fashion'd himself on the Greek orator as his model; but he admitted, to Dr. Parr, that he had never master'd him. Bossuet went not to these fountains for the waters of eloquence, but to Pascal and Homer. While Voltaire always had on his table, Massillon and Racine. And who, in our own country, with all the efforts to keep up classical studys, and the extravagant admiration of the ancients, who ever heard of Webster and Clay, of Pinckney and Wirt, of Cheves, Calhoun and McDuffie, seeking their energy, or reasoning, or resources, in Greek or Latin orators? Looking,

then, to the practice of orators themselves, and of ninety-nine out of evry hundred, who have studyd Demosthenes and Cicero, I feel that I cannot be mistaken in the assertion, that they hav all borne the most decisiv testimony to the fact, that there is neither entertainment nor inspiration to be derivd from such authors.

Having disposd of the Orators and Historians, let us now attend to the classic poets. Of what value are they? I answer, of *none*, so far as useful knowlege is concernd; for all must admit, that none is to be found in this class of writers. It is plain, that truth is a *very minor* concern, with writers of fiction. You can, therefore, only expect from them, amusement. But I would appeal to evry hundred, who hav read them, and ninety-nine will say, they would rather read Marmion and the Lady of the Lake, Ivanhoe and Kenilworth, than Homer and Virgil into the bargain. Who ever reads Homer and Virgil, in the original, for entertainment? If there be any such in the United States, I hav never met with them, or heard of them. But we are told of the morals of the poets, and their noble sentiments. As to their morals, who would be willing to hav a son, or brother, like the insolent and brutal Achilles, the hero of the Iliad; or like the mean and treacherous Æneas, the hero of the Æneid, if, indeed, it has any hero. What is the moral of the Iliad, from beginning to end, but war, in all its forms of slaughter and violence? And where is the moral of the Æneid to be found, but in the meanness, ingratitude and perfidy of Æneas, to Dido: and in his dishonorably and forcibly depriving Turnus of his betrothd bride, against her will, and then killing him? But again, we are told that in the sketching and shading of character, the ancient poets are unrivald. I am strangely mistaken, if there be not more power, fidelity, and beauty in Walter Scott, than in a dozen Homers and Virgils. Who would compare Achilles with Burley of Balfour; Agamemnon, with Cœur de Lion, or the Bruce; Nestor, with the Douglas; Hector, with Ivanhoe; Ulysses, with Louis 11th; Helen, with Effie Deans, or Constance; Andromache, with Ellen, or the countess of Leicester or Margaret of Branksome; Lavinia, with the Betroth'd or the bride of

Lammermoor; Dido, with Queen Elizabeth; or Camilla with Diana Vernon? And as to Calchas and Chryses, Cassandra and the Sybil, Meg Merrilies, alone, is worth a hundred such: while the death-scenes of Marmion, Front-de-bœuf, and the Templar, are more admirable than all the like in the Iliad and Æneid. What is there in them, to compare to the single combats of Burley and Bothwell; of Fitzjames and Roderick Dhu; of Ivanhoe and the Templar; of Saladin and the Leopard Knight? Again, we are told of the noble and moral sentiments of the classic poets. The beauties of Seakspeare are worth all the beauties of Homer and Virgil. There is more of the sublime, the moral, and the beautiful, of patriotism, in the penitent, self-sacrificing Roderic, of Southey, and in the virtuous, magnanimous Samor of Milman, than in all the character of the Iliad and Æneid, put together. As to the moral sentiment to be found in ^{Horace} ~~Homer~~, Juvenal and Persius, can it be compard to the Christian moral sentiment of Cowper? whose Task, I would rather hav written, than the Epistles of the first, and the Satirs of all of them.

Let me not pass unnoticed, Cicero's Offices, a book, of which a clergyman, the head of a college, has said, in a lecture on moral philosophy, "without the careful study of it, even at this time, a moral education must be allowd to be *very imperfect*." If this be true, it follows, irresistibly, that they ought to be publishd as an appendix to the New Testament, to *perfect the imperfect moral code of Christianity*. We still tolerate the Apocrypha, a mere human composition, as an appendix to the history and morals of the Old Testament. Why should we not welcome Cicero's treatis, as an *indispensable* addition, if that opinion be true, to our *unfinished* moral code? But in truth, so far is the sentiment from being accurate, that the Sermon on the Mount, alone, is worth all the Offices of Cicero: and the New Testament, so far from being an imperfect, is a perfect code of moral duty. The truth is, the moral philosophy of Cicero, like that of Epectetus and Antoninus, is of no more value, now that we hav the New Testament, than the works of Aratus, Manilius, and Ptolemy, now that we hav the modern astronomy. The ancient writers on morals are of no

more importance to ninety-nine out of evry hundred, who study Greek and Latin, than the old writers on the mechanism of the heavens. Both classes of the ancients belong, not to the sciences, in their present state, but to their history, and to the history of the progress of the human mind. They do not, therefore, concern, and cannot interest, more than one out of evry thousand of educated men; for how few hav paid any attention to the history of philosophy, or to the philosophy of history and society?

These are my views of the mathematics and classics, as sources of valuable and entertaining knowlege. They are views, which grew up gradually, I can scarcely tell how, in the course of twenty years after I left college, and hav been maturing and strengthening ever since. I giv them now as the fruits of reading and meditation, of conversation and observation, thro' a period of twenty-seven years. I cannot therefore but say, if the schoolmaster be abroad in the land, as he certainly is, he is not a valuable schoolmaster, so far as mathematics and classics are concernd; because they do not furnish useful and interesting knowlege to the great majority who study them. Thus far he is not in my opinion, the people's schoolmaster; because as to these branches, he is not the schoolmaster of our age and our country.

The fifth objectionable feature, in things as they are, is, that the present system *has no direct and obvious tendency as a good system ought to hav, to create and preserv the habit of intellectual improvement and the lov of reading.* Its tendency on the contrary is just the revers. This is matter of fact: and lies open to the observation of evry one, who has only to look abroad with an attentiv eye, and he will come to the same conclusions at which I hav arrivd. These are proof that the great majority of those, who hav study'd the classics and mathematics, acquir'd from them no lov of study and taste for reading, plainly because they study'd them as tasks, and without pleasure: and secondly of that great majority, all who acquir'd and preserv'd such a lov and taste were indebted for them to the poets, novelists, historians, biographers and essayists of England and America. Now, a system of education, which instead of creating that lov of study

and that taste for reading, leaves the young to make it or find it, when and how they can, is lamentably deficient in a principal duty. That this is one of the most important and sacred duties of instructors, can be doubted by no man. All will agree that the love of study and a taste for reading are among the chief securities of virtue and character, of happiness and usefulness in *the great majority* of the educated. Other impulses govern the *few*; but never reach the many; such as uncommon strength of principle and purpose, ambition and remarkable talents, or peculiar advantages of encouragement and example. The few require little or no stimulus to mental improvement. How much the many require, how difficult to select, to apply, to make operative, all teachers know to their sorrow. And yet, as though to create and secure to themselves a tenfold share of trouble, of trial, of temper, of mortification, they still persist in teaching the classics and mathematics, which are the chief, I may almost say, the only fountains of such torment to themselves and of such widespread calamity to their pupils. When will the schoolmaster who is abroad in the land, take a plain, practical, common-sense view of his office; instead of setting down contented, with theories, of education, which originated in other ages and countries, and none of which had *the people* in view. Why will he not study society, as it is in his own country? Its character as a Christian, American community; its wants and objects, as a republican, educated, reading people? The schoolmaster of *things as they are*, has indeed done much, and deserves our thanks, but the schoolmaster of *things as they should be*, will deserve and receive from the people of this country, Benjamin's portion of praise and gratitude.

6. The sixth objectionable feature in the existing order of things, is, that our schemes of education do not furnish *that disciplin of mind, which the country stands in need of*. What, I shall be asked, do you deny, that the mathematics are an admirable disciplin of mind? Where will you find such close and clear reasoning, such consummate logic. Grant it all, for the sake of the argument, but the question arises, what have the *materials* and the *modes* of reasoning of the *Mathematician*, to do with the materials and modes of reasoning, in the *moral*

sciences? If a man is to spend his life in thinking and reasoning about *matter* and its *forms*, and *relations*, let him devote all his youth to the science of *matter*. But on the contrary, if he is to live in the world of men, and to think and reason about the duties and business, and all their relations, public and private, does it not, then, seem to be the wise course, to draw his *materials*, his *habits of thinking* and *modes of reasoning*, from the world of *men*, not the world of *matter*? The great evils which now exist in all our schemes on the subject of thinking and reasoning, is, that the logic of mathematics is cultivated as tho' it were the logic of actual life; whether public or private. But it is the logic of neither. No one ever apply'd the thinking and reasoning of the mathematician, to the business or the duties of life. It would be as complete a misapplication of the geometer's art, as if we were to employ the forms of intricacies of the scholastic logic for the same purposes. The mathematician and the schoolman's arts, are equally strangers to the business and duties of real life. They have no more to do with the subjects and relations, with the trials and difficulties of duty and business, than the art of the astrologer. Now, the reliance placed upon the mathematics as a system of mental discipline, has led to the neglect of thinking and reasoning, peculiar to the moral sciences. If the time devoted to the mathematics, were dedicated to the latter, we should not only have sounder thinkers and better reasoners on the business and duties of life; but men incomparably better informed on religions, political, moral and mental philosophy.

Let us grant it, for the sake of argument, say the admirers of the classics, and we offer you in them the very desideratum you are in search of. My reply is a very obvious one. It is true, that you offer me books which treat of the affairs of men and nations, of their duties and business. But none of them concern me. They belong to a different age, state of society and country, to men among whom we never have lived and never shall live. Is it not wise to take our own age and country, our own institutions and state of society, as materials; and to train ourselves to think and to reason upon and from them; seeing that they are to be the subjects of all our duties and busi-

ness thro' life? Common sense cannot hesitate in giving an affirmativ reply; but unfortunately common sense has hitherto had but little influence in constructing schemes of education. And I fear it will continue to hav but little

“ Till warn'd or by experience taught, she learns,
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom :

Par. Lost, B. 8, v. 190.

But the advocates of the classics will then say — What tho' we grant your remark to be just, will it not be conceded that, independently of the facts, principles and reasonings containd in the classics, the very study of languages, in the application of rules of grammar, and in the investigation of the meaning of words and sentences, is of itself an admirable disciplin of mind? My reply is again a very obvious one. Here also, you overlook in your anxiety to vindicate the classics, the true ends of education. If men had to spend their lives in thinking and reasoning *about the meaning of words and sentences*, there would be justice in your argument. But they are on the contrary to spend their lives in reasoning and thinking *about men and things*: and these presuppose a command of language, a knowlege of the meaning of words, and of the construction of sentences. Very true, it will be said; but is it not the very disciplin thro' which you go in the study of the classics? which fits you thus to think and reason about men and things.

My answer is, it is not; for the study of Greek and Latin sentences, teach me to understand English sentences, no more than the study of Spanish, French or Italian: not as much indeed; because these resemble English much more in evry respect, than the ancient languages. Besides, if it were granted, that such was the efect of studying Latin and Greek, what a waste of time to accomplish the purpos; when nine tenths of what you study has nothing to do with English. The proof is easy. There are in our language no cases, no declensions, no conjugations: we hav no government but the simple rule, that prepositions and activ verbs govern their objects. Of verbs, prepositions, adjectiva, participles, adverbs, as governing difer-

ent cases, we know nothing. Now, turn to your Greek and Latin Grammars, and how much, after taking out all this do you find applicable to English? The only answer is, about *one tenth*, if as much: and that one tenth consists for the most part of the plain, simple rules of universal grammar. Why then should I be tormented and perplexed by the study of those nine tenths, which hav nothing to do with my language, when the remaining one tenth can just as well be obtained from any other foreign language, and of course, still more perfectly from my own? Now, all my thinkings and reasonings about men and things are to be carry'd on in English. Would it not seem wiser then, to learn the art of thinking and reasoning from the English itself, rather than from a foreign language? the more especially too, when it is considerd, how exceedingly the idioms of Greek and Latin differ from those of our own tongue.

7. This leads me to the next objectionable feature in our existing schemes of education. I refer to the *neglect of the study of the English language*. This, beyond all doubt, is sacrificed to the study of Greek and Latin. Remove these, and the study of English alone could take their place, and we should hav a hundred admirable English scholars, where we now hav ninety-nine, *neither* Greek, Latin nor English, and one, *tolerable* as a classical, but inferior as an English scholar. English is the instrument, by which the great majority are to obtain characters, standing, employment and property: by which they are to discharge the offices, dutys and business of society; by which they are to enjoy domestic and social happiness, and all the rational innocent pleasures of life: and by which they are to serv God and their country, their familys, friends, and the human race. Yet this language of such incalculable value, is most strangely neglected, instead of being the subject of study from beginning to end, in the school, academy and college. I should not regard myself as discharging one of the clearest, and most interesting of dutys, if I did not inculcate on the young mind the most profound respect for their noble, admirable nativ English. I would hav them to regard it with the sanctity of feeling, with which they venerate a father, with the deep and pure love, with which they cling to a mother.

A thorough knowlege of the English grammar and English language is indeed a most rare acquirement, in the student who has finishd his education at our colleges. I scarcely ever met with one who possesd it. For myself, I know that after I had graduated, I was obliged to study the English grammar myself, to make up for my deficiencys. The degree of Bachelor of Arts, so far from pre-supposing that the graduate is master of his own language, is on the contrary in too many instances, a proof that he is not. Such is at least the very clear result of my observation and experience.

8. The next objectionable feature in our present schemes of education is, that they teach English composition very imperfectly; while extempore speaking and conversation find no place in the scheme. Now, the command of the English language in these three forms, is absolutely indispensable to evry educated man in our country; and the neglect of them is therefore the more to be wonderd at, and lamented. It is plain that a very large amount of all public and private business must be conducted thro' the medium of writing. Look at the hundreds of editors, and the thousands of contributors to our public prints, throughout our country; and at the immens amount of public and private business transacted thro' letters, which cannot be composd by any study of epistolary forms. The truth is, English composition ought to be a prominent part of all education from the time the hand writing is well formd, to the exercises at commencement. It is one of the best exercises of the mind that can be devisd for the cultivation of thinking and reasoning, and for acquiring the art of using and applying our knowlege. Facility in composition is only to be acquird in most instances, by continued practice thro' a long course of years. A theme, or essay, or call it what you will, ought to be requird once a week from the age of ten, till education is finishd.

If composition is neglected, how much more is extempore speaking. I do not mean of course speaking *without* preparation, but the revers, speaking *after* preparation. As the matter now stands, this most important branch of education is left in the hands of the students in their debating societys. These are acknowlegd to be very valuable institutions, by all who

know any thing of the history of colleges. In my opinion, every class, whether in school, academy, or college, ought to become according to its degree of improvment, a debating society, the tutor or the professor of rhetoric, being the presiding officer. Look at the time spent in teaching declamation, that is, the art of delivering with suitable energy, variety and grace, the compositions of *others*; an art absolutely useless in itself, except to the actor or the reciter of specimens of eloquence or poetry. But the art of speaking *one's own* compositions, whether committed to memory or deliverd extempore, is totally neglected. Surely this is a strange contradiction—to teach the art of declaiming, and yet not to teach the application of it by each individual in his own case. Is not this much the same, as to instruct apprentices how to make *models*, and yet never to teach them how to make *the very things*, for whose sake only, the models are of any value. Now, why should not the extempore speaking of the student furnish an opportunity for applying the art of declamation to its only legitimate, because its only useful object, extempore speaking. I would have the teacher, while delivering his opinion, to rise and to set the example himself of applying declamation to the art of extempore speaking. It is to be rememberd also, that preparation for this exercise is among the most efficient modes of improvment that is known in the cultivation of thinking and reasoning, and the application of our knowlege. I need hardly say, that all my remarks as to the value of composition in actual life, for the transaction both of public and private business, apply with still greater force to extempore speaking. How many speeches are deliverd *in legislative halls and courts of justice*, in comparison of the reports and decisions that are written. In popular assemblies and in an *immens number of societys* of various descriptions, almost every thing is done by speaking, and not by writing. And yet, this art, absolutely indispensable to the social and public business of the country, is untaught; while its shadow, its mere mask, declamation, is assiduously attended to. Is not this, like the statuary, who should instruct his pupil in the costume of statuary; but should leave him to learn the sculpture of the human form, by his own unassisted efforts?

I complain also of the existing schemes of education, because they do not teach the art of conversation. I say the *art* of conversation; for it is indeed a noble art: and well deserves to be rankd as an important branch of education. How much of human happiness, usefulness and business depends on this talent! How much of public and private duty and influence! How entirely does it fill up the vast blank, which is left unoccupied either by the art of writing, or by that of speaking! Among the educated and polishd, the faculty for conversation is studiously cultivated as an object of taste, for the sake of ex-celing, and as a promoter of social pleasure. Now, the possession of the art in a much inferior degrees, is a valuable acquisition to persons of evry description. The highest are not too elevated, nor the humblé too low, to partake of its benefits. We may call it indeed the friend and companion of all, and emphaticaly of the people. A very important object is undoubtedly gaind by the introduction of this practice into education. It will aid in removing the restraint, which many times exists between a teacher and his pupils, impairing his influences over them, and maintaining the outward form of authority, without any solid and cordial support in the esteem or respect of the young. To engage once a week in a free, yet well-bred and perfectly respectful conversation, could not but strengthen the bond of union between the instructor and his scholars; for the candor and warmth of social intercourse would draw them closer together. The subject of this weekly conversation should be the compositions of the class, as furnishing a subject ready to hand, upon which most; if not all would be prepar'd, of course. A great object would be, for the master to criticise the papers handed in, leading the pupils themselves to take part in it by proposing questions for them to answer; and thus inducing conversation on the various errors or oversights, which the superior skill of the teacher might detect. I should not rest satisfyd, however with conversation merely on that day. It seems to me, that in many instances the teacher ought to make the lesson the subject of conversation, rather than of recitation. I apprehend he could just as easy satisfy himself by a few questions on a sentence, whether the scholars had studyd it, as by

hearing them recite it. Indeed I should regard it as a much more certain method; for they may recite without understanding it, but they cannot answer judicious questions, without understanding it. This plan would enable him to save a great deal of time, now lost on unnecessary details. Besides it has this capital advantage. It does what the whole system, as now administered, is radically defective in, *it draws out the minds of the pupils*, and gives them an activity of exercise, which is sadly neglected in the present plan. Now, conversation is decidedly one of the best means of improving the mind, by putting in requisition all its powers, not separately, but happily combined together in their action. The colloquial intercourse of inferior with superior minds is an admirable species of education for the great majority of them, having the tendency to raise them gradually above their own standard. To cultivate such minds also in this mode, cannot but create as a necessary consequence more of self-reliance, because it gives a readier command of their own powers and resources. Nor can we fail to see, that the effect of a change in this respect in education, would be, thro' the influence of pupils thus trained, to improve conversation in its style, materials and spirit. May I conclude this part of our subject by an illustration? Conversation is to the mind like daily exercise to the body; while composition and extempore speaking are like long journeys. These are indispensable to the few, tho' for the sake of the many; that is indispensable to the many, for their own sakes. Hence the obligations of teachers to cultivate those three branches assiduously. Certainly "the people's school-master," if he rightly understands and duly appreciates those obligations, should not fail so to do: and yet he does.

9. The ninth objectionable feature in the present system of education is, that while there is some apparent attention paid to English grammar, (and taking the whole scheme of school, academy, and colleges together, *it is more apparent than real*,) yet there is no attention whatever paid to *speaking* good grammar. Does it not seem strange, that so much pains should be taken to teach a boy the rules of grammatical speaking, and yet *that he should never be exercised in them by actual practice?*

Is not this another error in things as they are, precisely analogous to that which teaches declamation, but not extempore speaking. Does not each of them teach *the thing to be applied, without teaching how to apply it*? Now, it is the plain and undeniable duty of a master, not only to take care, that no bad grammar be spoken by the pupils at any time, within his hearing, a thing of more constant occurrence than most instructors are aware of, but to make *instruction in grammatical speaking a regular exercise* of the school. This end is at once attained, in the most simple and beneficial form that can be devised, by recitations in the form of conversation: and by critical examinations in the same mode, of the compositions of the class. Now, if the master would make this a *daily* business, he would accomplish far more than he now does, with all his theoretical instruction. Grammar then would cease to be, as it now is, the useless torment of *children and boys*, and would become, as it ought to be, the study only of *youth sufficiently advanced to understand it, with little or no trouble*. In this mode, all the time now wasted on grammar would be saved: and more would be understood *and known of it* in six months, than is now attained in several years.

I hav thus completed my survey of *things as they are* in education: and hav endeavord to show you, that the schoolmaster, who is abroad in our land, is not the schoolmaster of our age and country; that he is not a wise, observant, practical schoolmaster; that he is not the people's schoolmaster; because he does not consult their *best interests* in the *best modes*. I hav presented to your consideration nine objections to our existing schemes of education. I recapitulate them briefly.

1. The system is not *decidedly religious*.
2. It is not *decidedly American*.
3. It suits equally well other ages and countrys, forms of government, states of society, and literature.
4. It does not fill the mind with valuable and entertaining knowlege; because the mathematics and classics, which occupy so large a portion of youthful time, do not furnish either.
5. It does not create and preserv the love of study and a taste for reading.
6. It does not furnish the disciplin of mind which our country needs.
7. It neglects, strangely and unhappily, the study of

the English language. 8. It teaches composition very imperfectly, and extempore speaking and conversation, not at all. 9. It does not teach pupils to *speak* good English. However much it may be doubted, whether all of these objections are of equal avail against the existing order of things, it cannot be denyd, that there are both truth and reason, in a greater or less degree in all of them. They deserv then the serious consideration of all, who are engaged in the instruction of youth.

I proceed now to the second grand division of my subject: and propose to lay before you the correctivs to the nine objections, which I hav made. In doing this, I shall present to you things *as they should be*, in my opinion, contrasted with *things as they are*. It will be perceiv'd, that the heads already presented hav been examin'd, some very briefly, others extensivly. Thus will my labor be diminish'd in this second division; whilst it has had the efect as I hope, of deversifying the subject by varying the mode of treating it. The reasonings offerd so much at large under some of the topics, will render very little necessary beyond a statement of opposit views.

1. Things as they should be, demand then imperatively, that education should be *decidedly religious*. It is granted on all hands, that religion is the highest interest of man; that it is the cement of society and the foundation of government; that it is the best safeguard of duty, and a fountain of the purest happiness. It is also granted, that nothing can supply its place, that arts and sciences, learning and eloquence, genius and taste are of little value without it. Equally is it granted, that the great majority who come out of our schools, and colleges, learn *nothing* in them of this momentous concern. Can this be right any where? How much more is it wrong then, in a country where the people, being and doing evry thing, are uncontrol'd, but by the *voluntary* restraints they lay upon themselves. Is not religion incomparably more important in such a case, than where an old establishd order of things, in a good measure independent of them, commands the habitual respect and obedience of the people? It is granted by evry intelligent man, that religion is the chief safeguard of American institutions; that none but a religious people can remain free: that

without morals, there is no foundation or cement for government, and that society must be a chaos, fit only for despotism, aristocracy, or anarchy. And yet, tho' all this be granted, the Christian religion, emphatically the religion of the people, is not made a part of the scheme of general education. I cannot but regard this as a great calamity to the country: and it becomes well the people of the United States, to consider whether they are not guilty of a striking dereliction of duty to their posterity, by thus excluding religion from their daily course of instruction. Let the schoolmaster who is abroad in our land, answer then the question, is he a Christian schoolmaster?

I *have* said that nothing can supply the place of Christianity. A moment's reflection will put this beyond doubt. It is the only religion that is spiritual, intellectual, moral; the only one that fills at once the soul, the mind, the heart; the only religion that is profound in doctrine, simple in precept, and perfectly practical; the only one that teaches the most enlightend duty and the most enlargd usefulness; and enjoins an inflexible faith in God, and comprehensiv, considerate, tender love to man. Such a religion was evidently given to be the only basis of all character in this life, as it is the only security for bliss in the world to come. It was given as the sole standard of duty; the sole test of usefulness; the sole fountain of happiness, temporal and eternal. This religion was vouchsaf'd to man, to teach him what he can never learn from any other source, the character of God, his own character and necessitys, his relation to God and his fellow-men, and his own destiny, whilst it meets the demands of evry form of government, of evry state of society; and of evry condition of life. It is equal to the most sublime, as to the most humble dutys, to the most extended, as to the most minute usefulness, to all that the public can require, or the individual need. It was given to convert the Pagan into the Christian, by abolishing his system of religion and morals, personal, social and public; by working a thorough change in the principles and character of his relations, public and private; by efecting a fundamental revolution in the spirit of his institutions; by substituting the will of God for the will of man; the

rule of duty for the rule of expediency: and the meek, benevolent, long-suffering virtues of the Prince of Peace, and God of Love, for the proud, destructiv, unforgiving heroic virtues of Grecian and Roman Patriots. This religion was given to work an entire change in the character, habits and prospects of man; to purify, reform and regenerate society and government; to make each distinct people a Christian nation, and of all, a Christian world.

Now, it is impossible that Christianity can ever accomplish its object; *unless it be made an element of all general education*: and enter into the daily administration of the whole system. The first great reform to be made then in things as they are, so as to make them things as they should be, is to introduce religion into the evry day instruction of school, academy and college. The Bible should become a text book, from the infant-school to the university; not only as the fountain of duty and usefulness; but as containing history, the most authentic and valuable; biography the most instructiv and interesting; the most profound philosophy, theological and moral; the most enlarg'd yet practical wisdom; eloquence and poetry, the most sublime, pathetic and beautiful. The scriptures should draw along with them, as a matter of course, all the requisit text books to explain and illustrate their history and biography, antiquitys, manners, customs and geography; as also their peculiar theology and morals. With the great advantages now afforded by the higher order of Sunday-school books, for the selection of such works in the scholastic and academic departments, there could be no difficulty. It would be one consequence of this great change, that the philosophy of Paley could be no longer tolerated: and, when rejected, either the Bible alone would be the standard of moral philosophy, or some work like Jonathan Dymond's Essays, must be adopted as a worthy hand-maid of the Christian Testament. Or, perhaps, such a body of sermons as Dr. Dwight's on the ten commandments, might be advantageously introduced. It would not be difficult, if the demand for them should warrant it, to select from the best English and American Divines, a couple of volumes that would exhibit a very satisfactory view of Christian morals.

2. The second great change, which should be wrought in the existing system of education, is to make it *decidedly American*. This would seem to be as obviously right and expedient, in a temporal point of view, as the preceding, in an eternal. That the history and institutions of our own country demand more of our time and attention than any other, cannot surely be doubted. Does it not then appear strange, that they should form so inconsiderable a part of the studies of American youth; when every one admits that to be ignorant of them is disgraceful to the man. How shall the man know them as he ought? except he be well informed as to facts; and be deeply imbued with their spirit, in early life. This is obviously the wise and efficient course, and in this respect, there must be an AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION, before it will be fit for and worthy of this country. I would then propose that American history, biography, and geography should become part of every plan of general instruction, thro' the whole course of education: This would commence with the discovery of America, would embrace the history of all the other countries of the new world; would present the annals of each of our states of the revolution, confederation, and new constitution, down to the latest period, to which an authentic, well written history could be obtained. American biography follows of course. I do not name the Life of Washington; because it is, to a vast extent, identical and co-extensive with the history of his country. But the lives of the most remarkable of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, with those of Franklin, Green, Jay, Henry, Morris and others, are worth incomparably more in the education of Americans, than the whole body of classic biography, notwithstanding the sentiment of Theodore Gaza, that if all books were about to be destroyed, but one, he would, if he had the selection, save Plutarch. Let us present the following consideration, in favor of American history and biography. If there is not time for studying both the foreign and domestic departments of these branches of knowledge, which ought to be preferred? Assuredly no one can hesitate in replying "unquestionably our own." Again, if there be time for the study of both, which ought to be preferred? Can but one answer be

given? certainly our own. Let us make sure of that in the first instance, and then whatever can be spared for the other, shall be given to it. Perhaps, it may be said that ancient is the foundation of modern history, and therefore ought to be first taught. The reply is an obvious one. If your system contained a *complete* course of ancient and modern history, there would be sense in the remark; but in truth it comprises nothing of modern, but what is found in one or two juvenile books, and as to ancient history, you offer nothing, but *disjointed fragments*. I do not however admit the justness of the remark, for however novel or strange the opinion may appear, I am convinced, that the best plan is to study history backwards, not forwards. This remark applies to the history of the world as divided into great periods; to the history of *particular nations*, as divided in the same manner; and to the history of great events, if sufficiently independent of each other, as the American compar'd with the British and French Revolutions: the reformation, compar'd with the discovery of America. The very fact that the history of different countrys, and of great periods, are written as separate works, establishes this position. The history of each nation is far more connected with that of cotemporary nations than with any that preceded it. The history of evry people is to a far greater extent independent, than dependent on that of preceding nations. It is the same with the history of remarkable eras in the life of any given nation: and with regard to periods of a more general character, such as the crusades, and the thirty years' war, the great mass of facts which constitute the history, are independent of preceding history. And as to either class, a suitable introduction, and suitable explanations in the body of the work, would be all sufficient for the vast majority of readers. I am not providing, it will be observed, a course of history for the profound student of the history and philosophy of society, in its progress from the plains of Shinar to the prairies of our great west, and in all its phases of the savage and barbarian, of the civilized and the polishd.

I am sensible that succeeding history is always more or less connected with the preceding; but this connection is much

more obvious and important in the history of society and its institutions, than in what is commonly call'd history, and especially *ancient* history, that is the annals of *governments* and *rulers*. Now the latter is chiefly occupy'd with war and foreign relations: and would occupy the years of childhood and boyhood; while the former is more particularly devoted to institutions, and domestic relations, and would be reserv'd for youth and early manhood, supposing education to cōse at twenty-one. So with regard to biography. *Private* or *personal* biography should be the study of early years, but the lives of *public* men, including eminent clergymen, missionaris, and philanthropists, which belong properly to the historical department, would be laid aside for the period between sixteen or seventeen and twenty-one. I regret that the value of *private* biography is so little estimated. The lives of *warriors* above all others, seem to be selected for school-books; as tho' in the eye of religion and reason, and as tho' in our age and country, the warrior were not a *subordinate* character. Is it not altogether wiser, safer, and more consistent with the spirit of American institutions, to put into the hands of our youth, the lives of men, eminently useful as Christians, and philanthropists; as professional men, merchants, and mechanics; as artists, farmers, seamen and travelers? The warrior is but the gay plume, the graceful tassel of society: *they are society itself*. By this change, we accomplish two objects, in my judgment, of great value. First, we keep before youth continually, classes of character, of events and scenes, of virtues and vices, arising out of conditions of life, for which the great majority of them are destin'd. Such biography is therefore an actual preparation for real life. It is constantly familiarizing them with facts, which are to become under various modification, the very substance of their own, and of the lives of all around them. Second, this species of biography is calm and grave, breathing the spirit of peace, usefulness and benevolence; whereas the life of the warrior, like his arms and dress, is gaudy and full of the new and unnatural, compar'd to ordinary life; and of cruelty, pride and misery, when contrasted with the usual course of events in citys, villages, or the country at

large. Hence, we should not set before the young mind, an ostentatious, exaggerated, dazzling standard of human life and character, of reputation and hope. On the contrary, we should present a scene, plain and serious, teaching evry where private and social duty and usefulness, in the very walks and relations of life, which the great majority must occupy. How few of the multitude who are educated, are to be public men: and how fortunate for the country, how happy for themselves, if all our public men had been train'd in early life, in this plain, valuable, benevolent school of biography.

The third great change, which I desire to see wrought in the existing schemes of education, would be to make them in all respects *peculiarly suitable to our religion, government, state of society and literature*. It is manifest, that these objects would be attain'd in a great degree, by the alterations propos'd under the two preceding heads: and all beyond that which might be desirable, would be accomplish'd by the changes to be hereafter mention'd. . The combin'd efect of all would be to make education, as it ought to be, the natural offspring of its own age and country, suited to their present state and exigencys and thoroughly prepar'd for its own progress and prospects.

4. The fourth great change, which I propose, is to provide in evry stage of education *an abundant supply of useful and entertaining knowlege*. This would be partly accomplish'd, under the two points previously noticed. From the views already presented, under the corresponding heads of my first division, you will not be surpris'd, that I am prepar'd to lay aside both the classics and mathematics, as departments of education. I hav been gradually brought to this conclusion, thro' a course of years, founded on personal experience, observation and long continued reflection. This result is directly contrary to all my original opinions and predilections: and being unable to trace the change to any motivs of selfishness, ambition, disappointment, or to any other like source, I am constrain'd to act upon it, as a deliberate, dispassionate conviction, equally approv'd by my conscience, mind and heart. I hav said that I would retain so much of common arithmetic, as is valuable for the business of life. All the rest I should discard, and with them, as fit companions in

the department of the useless and unentertaining, I would banish both Greek and Latin, and all the classics, from a course of general education. Having satisfy'd myself, that the knowlege which they contain is valueless and uninteresting to the great majority, who have been hitherto compeld to study them, I do not scruple to abandon both. Being equally satisfy'd myself, that the disciplin of mind which they impart, is equally worthless to that same majority, I do not hesitate to abandon them on this account also. I propose to substitute, what cannot be denyd to be both useful and entertaining knowlege: and a species of disciplin more closely connected with, and better adapted to, the dutys and business of the great majority of the educated. It is plain, that I regard languages and mathematics as belonging to the department of *particular*, not *general* education. I would leav those, who need the former, as professional men or scholars; and such as require the latter, as engineers, surveyors, architects, navigators, professors, to obtain them, just as they do whatever is *peculiar* to themselves, and *not common* to them and the community. In a word, I regard the mathematics and the classics as *belonging* to the department of *professional*, not to that of *popular* education: and the classics, as properly an *ornamental*, not a *useful* branch of study. They must therefore, in my view, be rejected, in any scheme of *things as they should be*, which "The people's schoolmaster" might establish.

Let us now attend to the substitutes proposd. I have already said, that I should retain natural philosophy: and indeed, not only should I gladly keep it as a part of the course; but I should rejoice if thrice the time were spent upon it, which is now devoted to this branch. I should add also an extensiv course of natural history, as being full of curious and valuable information: and should especialy cultivate the departments, which treat of man, animals and plants. These are more open to the knowlege and observation of most men: and whilst they would be more readily preservd, they would become more extensively and frequently the subjects of conversation. This I regard, as one of the most important objects of *general* education, viz: to furnish materials and inducements for intelligent

and entertaining conversation. The present system, as to the great majority, is utterly barren of both.

To natural philosophy and natural history, I would add an *extensiv* course of geography, beginning with the study of *maps only, without books*, and ending with such a book as Maltebrun's. Too little attention is paid to this important and interesting department of knowlege. To a reading people like the Americans, who cannot take up a newspaper, without feeling the necessity of geographical information, its value must be obvious. As connected with this branch of education, I should rank those works, which treat of the wonders of art and nature. I can only say, that in my judgment, a young man would find more valuable and interesting knowlege in such books, than in the fragments of Greek and Roman history taught in our seminaries. We may arrange under the same head of geography, those publications, which treat of the manners and customs of different ages and countrys. These belonging to the department of the *costume*, not of the *institutions* of society, would be matters of curious and entertaining, not of useful knowlege; but as such they would hav their *value*, especialy in conversations. Geography seems also to embrace with propriety, the subject of travels. Many volumes of this description are full of useful and amusing facts, well worthy of being treasur'd up as materials for conversation; and like many other subjects already noticed, for argument and instruction, in speaking and writing. Take an example. To New-Englanders whether at home or abroad, the travels of Dr. Dwight, are more full of the instructiv and entertaining, than the Livy, Cæsar and Tacitus they study at school.

I hav already presented the subject of American history and biography. Let us now turn to the foreign. I regard English history, beginning with the age of the reformation, as more important to the American, next to the history of his own country, than all other history. To that, therefore, I would hav a large portion of time devoted: and the same remarks apply to English biography, including like the history, both Scottish and Irish. To English history, prior to the age of Henry 8th, less attention would be necessary; because with a few exceptions,

it is like ancient history, rather the annals of a succession of chiefs, than the history of the progress and development of a community. I would add to English history that of modern Europe generally; selecting particular periods and works, and the history of France especially on account of its intimate connection with that of England and Europe at large. Continental biography would of course be included in the plan.

It may perhaps be said, that such a mass of history would overload the memory and that in the cultivation of that faculty the understanding would be neglected. If it should be so, the fault would not lie in the subject or the student, but in the teacher. Let him make it his business to draw out the minds of his pupils, by requiring them to study the characters of men, as well as the motives of events, and to form and express their judgment on questions of public and private policy, of justice and injustice, of wisdom and folly, of propriety and impropriety. History and biography furnish the most abundant materials for the exercise of the thinking and reasoning powers of youth. Here also we see the advantage of the conversational mode of instruction; which would enable the teacher, without going *thro'* the whole lesson as usual, to satisfy himself whether his pupil had really studyd.

Following the order of the 4th head of my first main division, I come now to eloquence. Having laid aside the ancient, I should of course adopt the modern. Considering the English and American as one, I should introduce an extensiv course of Christian, civil and literary eloquence.

The first I would take from the best sermon writers of England and America, not with a view to doctrin and morals which belong to the first head of my second main division; but with a view to illustrate the evidences, character, relations, influence and progress of the Christian religion. The second I would select from the most able and eloquent speeches and opinions of statesmen, lawyers and judges, both English and American. Nor should I feel any difficulty in believing, that a young man who should study such a course, would be incomparably better educated, than he who had read all Cicero and Demosthenes.

My reason is a very obvious one. Eloquence, in all its departments, is a commentary on, and an *illustration* of the institutions of society, and is properly a branch of the philosophy of history. Preferring, therefore, the history of my own country and of England to every other, it follows of course, that I should prefer American and English, to Athenian and Roman eloquence, whether I regard their usefulness or interest. The former is the offspring of the genius of the age, and of the spirit of the institutions of the two nations; the latter belongs to remote eras and foreign countries. The third or literary department would consist of a selection of the ablest and most eloquent essays or articles in reviews illustrating various points in history, arts and sciences and literature: and serving as profound and eloquent commentaries on many of the facts and principles, which the course of education had already presented to the student. In such a volume, for example, I would have Dr. Channing's two articles on Buonaparte, Mr. Quincy's address on the second centennial anniversary of Boston, Mr. Webster's address on the landing of the Pilgrims, Mr. Everett's Phi Beta Kappa Oration at Yale; the articles in the Edinburgh Review on the Lake school; the Lady of the Lake, Leckse on Government, Alison on Taste, Milton's recently discovered work; in the Quarterly, on Gifford's Pitt, and the East India college at Hartford. These are but specimens: and I fear I do injustice to other writers and other articles of equal merit, by venturing this selection.

I have said, that elegance is properly a department of the philosophy of history. Let us now complete the department. The history of the institutions of society, of the structure and operations of government, and of literature, are embraced under this head. These branches are necessarily interwoven with history, and if this be written by able men, it contains abundant illustrations of those important particulars. But distinct works ought also to be studied, where they present noble views of the progress of events, or principles. For example, to name a few, Ferguson on Civil Society, Stewart's View of Society in Europe, Villers on the Reformation of Luther, Hallam's Middle Ages, Burke and McIntosh on the French Revolution, Hallam's

Constitutional History of England, Brodie's examination of Hume's errors, Adam Smith and Ricardo, Pitkin's Civil and Political History of the United States, the Federalist, Story's large work on the Constitution, &c.

The next subdivision of this fourth head leads me to the poets. Having rejected the classic historians and orators, the poets must share the same fate. And tho' I feel that I must expect to be denounced as a literary heretic; yet do I experience no compunction whatever in exchanging, as I do most cheerfully, Greek and Latin for English poetry. Whatever may be tho't of the preference, I do not hesitate to banish the one for the other. Instead of Homer and Virgil, I should take *Paradise Lost* and *Regaind*, Milman's *Samor* and Southey's *Roderic*, *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. The *Georgics* and *Hesiod* should giv place to the *Seasons*, the *Task*, the *Art of Preserving Health*, the *Pleasures of Imagination*, and *Childe Harold*. For the art of poetry, I would substitute the *Essay on Criticisms*, while the *Satirs* of Horace, Juvenal and Persius, should yield to Cowper's moral poems, the *Traveler* and *Deserted Village*, the *Essay on Man*, and Boyse's *Deity*. The odes of Horace and Anacreon would be laid aside without reluctance, for a selection from the occasional poems of Byron, Hemans, Campbell, Wordsworth, Rogers, Moore, and others. If any one should remark that several modern poems are assignd to the vacant nich of one ancient poet, and should thence be disposd to infer the superiority of the classics, I take leav to say, that the conclusion is totaly unfounded, in my opinion at least. For I do not doubt, that the *Paradise Lost* is worth the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Eneid* all together: there is more of sublime, rich and beautiful descriptiv poetry in *Childe Harold*, than in half a dozen *Georgics*: and Mrs. Hemans has written a greater number of charming little pieces, than are to be found in Horace and Anacreon. Besides, it ought to be considerd that the time spent upon a hundred lines of a Latin poet, would enable you to master more thoroughly five hundred English verses. Nor let this be overlookd that one hundred of the latter will produce a greater efect on the mind, heart and taste, than the same number of the former. This results from two considera-

tions: 1. Because so large a portion of time and attention is unavoidably bestowd upon the meaning of words, and the grammatical construction of sentences, that the great majority of those, who study Greek and Latin, care little about and understand still less of the writer's thoughts. 2. Because Madame De Stael is certainly right when she says, that no one can perfectly apprehend and relish the literature of a foreign language. This is the more true, precisely in proportion as the reader is unskild in the language, and his mind unimprov'd. How little the boys who study the boasted beautys of Homer and Virgil, of Horace, Pindar and Theocritus, can know about them, is intelligible to evry one, who has ever heard the best of them reciting in the classic poets. Perhaps it may be said, if this be true, still the modern poets are but imitators; and therefore it is not wonderful, that these require five hundred lines to supply the place of a hundred of those. My study of the ancients and moderns, has led to the conclusion, that there is as much originality among the moderns, as among the ancients. I do not agree with Voltaire in his paradox, that originality is nothing but judicious imitation. Such is indeed the originality of Virgil. But how much of the ancients do you find in Shakspeare, Milton and Byron? And where shall you look in classic poetry for the fountains of the Allegro and Pensive, of the Rape of the Lock and the Essay on Man; of Marmion, and the Lady of the Lake, of the Minstrel, Gertrude of Wyoming, Rimini, and the exquisit poems of Mrs. Hemans?

From the department of ancient poetry, we pass to that of Pagan Ethics. But this has been already disposed of, under the head of religious education.

5. The fifth subdivision of this second general division, corresponds to the same head under the first. There, I objected to the existing scheme; *because it has no direct and obvious tendency to create and preserve the habit of intellectual improvement, and a love for reading.* If I am right in the *principles*, upon which I propose to substitute English and American, for classic writers, then it cannot be doubted for an instant, that my system is incomparably better fitted to produce so desirable a result, than the present. Should any one question this, let him only look at

the avidity, with which boys read books of biography, history, travels, poetry, fiction in their own language, and contrast it with the reluctance or mechanical obedience, with which they study the classics.

6. I have said under my first general division, that the sixth objection to the existing system of education is, that it does not furnish *the disciplin of mind, which the country stands in need of*. If I have succeeded in demonstrating that position, I shall have left very little doubt that the principles of that argument will lead without difficulty to the conclusion, that the plan, which I am proposing is calculated to produce the very disciplin of mind, which the country needs. I have said, that the disciplin wanted, is that which is to be derived from the study of the human, not the material world; from the study of men and things, not of words and idioms. Now my scheme abounds in the *moral materials*, which are thus indispensable; for they are found in the history and public and private biography, which fill so large a space. It is equally obvious that such works furnish also abundant exercise of mind, in the reflections and reasonings of the writers on the motives and actions of men: these coupled with the writers in the departments of eloquence, and of the philosophy of history, give to the mind *that very species of disciplin*, which is so much needed in our country.

7. My seventh subdivision leads me to provide a remedy for the neglect of the study of the English language. I need hardly say, that I should not commence this study until the mind was so far opened and improved as to understand it on principles, and without the necessity of committing rules to memory. Then it would be intelligible and delightful to the young mind. It would then be like taking a youth, when he could comprehend it, into an extensive and complex machine, and making him acquainted with the mutual relations and reciprocal actions of the various parts. English grammar as now taught to children, is little better than a mere waste of time. This study should be continued down to the latest period of education, terminating in those higher departments of grammar, which, are identical with philology, as in the *Diversions of Purley*, and with intellectual philosophy, as in *Locke's Essay*.

8. The eighth objection stated to existing plans of education, was, that they taught composition very imperfectly, and extempore speaking and conversation not at all. I need add nothing here to what has been already said, under the corresponding head of the first general division. They would all hold in my system very prominent places, thro' large portions of it.

9. The ninth defectiv feature in the present scheme was stated to be, that no pains were taken to require the pupils to *speak good English*, but that they were allowd continually in evry stage of education, to speak ungrammatically. I need only say, that in my plan, it would become an object of particular and unremitted attention, to insist on the greatest exactness in this respect. I should thus supersede by a perfectly natural, easy and efficient process, the unnatural and useless attempt to teach the young to *speak* grammatically, by committing to memory a set of artificial rules, which hav no more influence in teaching them to speak correctly, than the study of lines, angles and curves had in teaching a boy to ride, swim or walk.

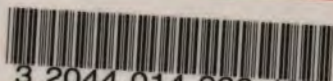
I hav thus shown you the schoolmaster *as he is*, and the schoolmaster *as he ought to be*, as discoverd in things *as they are*, and in things *as they should be*. I trust that the freedom, with which I hav spoken of existing schemes, of their lamentable deficiencies, and of the absolute necesity of thoro' reformation, may not giv offence. My object is to induce frequent and anxious reflection on the great question—"Is education what it should be?" I feel that the course, which my thoughts hav taken on this subject, constrain me to bring before the public of this country from time to time the important and interesting enquiry, "Ought education to be decidedly classical, decidedly mathematical? Ought it not rather to be Christian, decidedly American? Ought not *these*, not *those*, to occupy nine-tenths of the time of the young. If I hav succeeded in leading even a few, to think on these momentous topics, I shall not be without my reward. And, if I shall be able eventually to make a decided impression in favor of the views I hav presented, on the common sense and intelligence of the educated in our country, I shall feel that the reward is more ample than the deserts of the laborer. Ours

is emphatically a thinking, reasoning country. The spirit of our institutions is full of the freedom and power of thought. It pervades evry department of duty and business, whether public or private. To cultivate this spirit in himself, to promote it in others, is an obligation laid upon every citizen. He must expatriate himself to be absolv'd from it. Whilst he inhabits the home of independence in tho't and reasoning, he cannot shun the responsibility that is cast upon him. This is the universal law of American duty. It is imposed upon them by the highest and most solemn of all obligations, the Christian religion. It is commanded by the noblest system of civil and political liberty, that man has ever founded, the institutions of these United States. It is sanctiond by the enlightend common sense of the people; by the genius of philosophy and the spirit of literature; by the wisdom and experience of the statesman; by the eloquence of the orator.



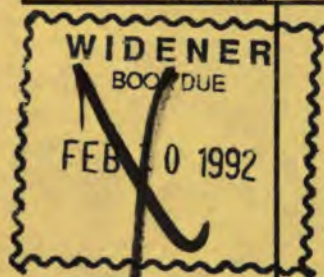






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